

The Ballarat Naturalist

Volume 22 No.6

July 2022



VALE Bill Murphy

Such a force in Field Naturalist circles comes along maybe once in a generation. In Bill and Pat Murphy, we hit the jackpot with two knowledgeable and dedicated people who shared their passion for nature with as many other people as they could.

This month's edition pays tribute to Bill Murphy in particular, who passed away in early June. Bill leaves behind a host of field nats friends and innumerable memories to cherish. A true gentleman, Bill will always be remembered, by those who were fortunate enough to know him, as a generous and amiable fellow who loved getting up close and personal to nature. As a keen observer of the natural world, Bill remains as an example to all of us. Loved by many, admired by many and now missed by many.

Ed.



Bill Murphy – a special friend

By Emily Noble, June 23, 2022

A moving memorial service was held on Tuesday 21st June at Pat Cashin Funerals to honour the memory of Bill Murphy, a treasured member of our club since 1968. Bill leaves a significant physical legacy (particularly in the form of photographs) and a deeply personal legacy of friendship, warmth, hospitality, service and generosity to our Club.

After joining the Field Naturalists' Club of Ballarat in 1968 with his wife Patricia (Pat), Bill took on the role of Club President just four years later, in 1972. He reprised the role in 1973 and 1975. He scoped and led countless field trips with Pat and was a generous host to Cliff Beaglehole, the botanist undertaking surveys of natural assets on public land in the Ballarat area in 1980 for the Land Conservation Council. Those surveys led to the reservation in-perpetuity of some very precious natural reserves in the region, including 270 hectares at Clarkesdale Bird Sanctuary in Linton.

Bill's wonderful photos have illustrated much of the Club's "Wattles of Ballarat" book and many field trip reports. His photographic record of Pat's collection of herbarium specimens (ably assisted by Paul and Elspeth) before they were donated to the National Herbarium of Victoria are a treasured asset of the club.

He loved the club and its members, considering it a second family and enjoying life-long friendships with many members. He was presented with our Club's Award of Merit in 2001 and awarded Life Membership of the FNCB in 2018.



Photographing Dwarf Greenhoods, Dereel, 28 July 2015

After his retirement, he joined Pat on almost daily “botanising” forays in the bush, keeping a photographic record of the many plant species they found and that she later formally identified and compiled into the lists that our members still take out on field trips today.



With fellow field nats at Spargo Mineral Springs, 9 Nov 2014

My first encounter with Bill (then aged 86) was on one such field trip, my first excursion as a new member of the FNCB. It was November 5th, 2013 and we had just spent a lovely morning exploring the western block of Bush Ranger Bushland Reserve, Pat Murphy’s detailed plant list in hand, now with quite a few species marked as found. As the group sat together eating lunch, Bill arrived with fellow field nat and close friend Paul to a very warm welcome. It was clear that he was a much-loved and venerated member of the club. I soon gathered that he hadn’t been seen much in recent years after the tragic and unexpected loss of his beloved wife and favourite field companion, Pat.

It wasn’t long before Bill spotted me, a “newbie”, treated me to one of his huge, twinkly-eyed grins and effortlessly struck-up a conversation. We were soon engrossed in discussion about the Club, our favourite bushland haunts and concerns about poor management of the various threats to our favourite patches of bush, including weeds, trail bikes and “controlled” burns like the one undertaken a couple of seasons before our field trip to Bush Ranger Reserve that had caused significant canopy scorch and a dense proliferation of Golden Bush-pea regeneration.

“How would it affect the orchids?”, Bill pondered aloud, and we quickly realised we shared a mutual appreciation of orchids in their natural habitat.

After telling him about the Musk Caladenias, Spotted & Slender Sun-orchids and Eastern Bronze Caladenias we’d found that morning, he was keen to show us where he and Pat had found “flying” duck orchids, Pink Fingers and sun orchids in the eastern section of the reserve, so we all headed off across the road. It was too early even for leaves of duck orchids yet, but he showed us where they would come up, and we found Pink Fingers along with Musk Caladenias and sun orchids. We had a wonderful afternoon, and it was the first of many field trips I shared with Bill.

He was always great company: warm, cheerful, enthusiastic, optimistic, interested in everything, funny, a great story-teller, conversationalist par excellence, generous with his knowledge and with his legendary egg sandwiches.

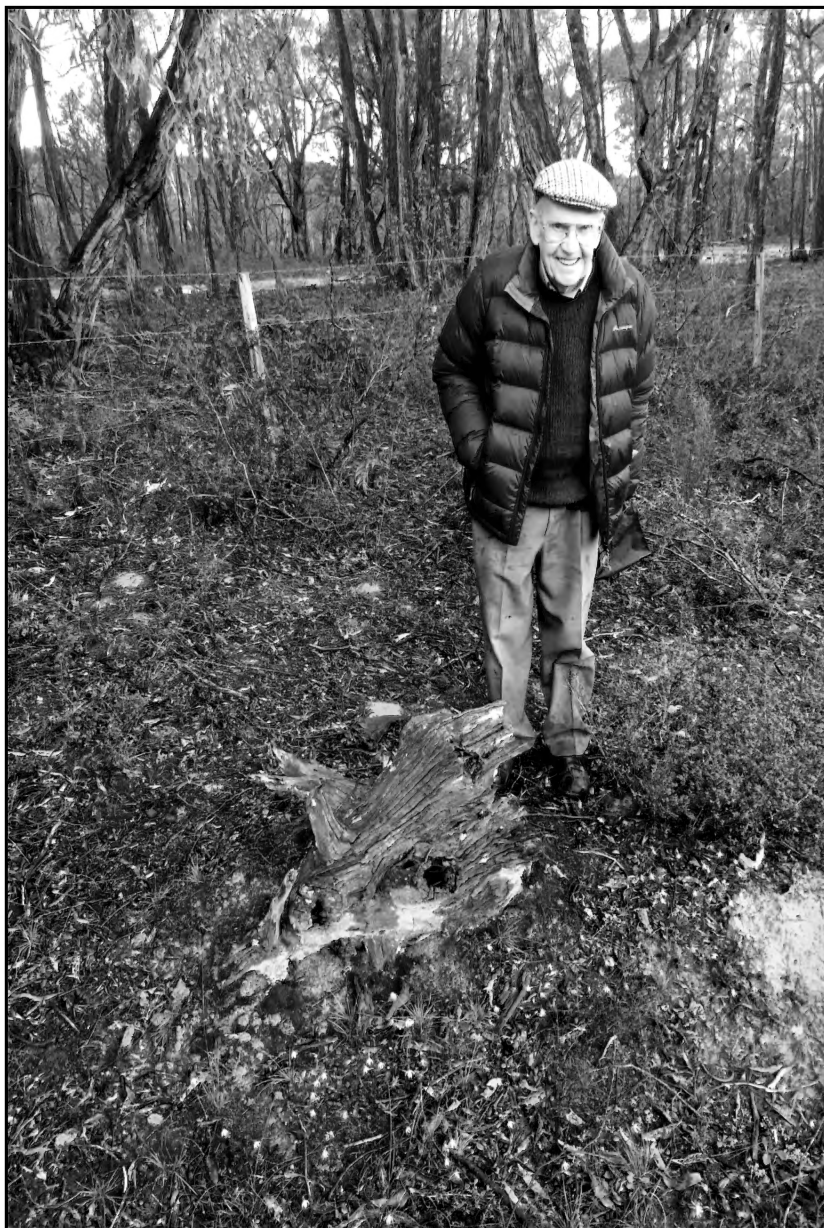
Together we re-discovered and celebrated so many special botanical finds that he had first enjoyed with Pat, and even found a few new ones like Austral Adder’s-tongues at Mt Beckworth. Every September, Bill and I would embark on an extra-special field trip in memory of Pat, visiting one of their favourite haunts to re-find treasured plants and landscapes. It was such a privilege to be entrusted with knowledge of these precious plants and places imbued with extra meaning because of their inextricable connection with Pat.



The rainbow arching over roadside veg, Snowgum Rd

He was 89 years old when he rang me from Snowgum Road, Dereel to tell me that he'd just found a colony of Blue Fingers and I'd "better drop everything and come out *now*" so he could show me where they were. How could I refuse?

It had been pouring all morning and began to hail as I hopped in the car. By the time I got to Staffordshire Reef, it was snowing, but when I got to the start of Snowgum Road, a rainbow arched amongst the roadside vegetation. Bill was bedecked in woollen cap and puffer jacket, eagerly beckoning me from the roadside to hurry up and see his exciting find. He was oblivious to the drizzle, and I soon was too. He had found a wonderful colony of Blue Fingers *Caladenia caerulea*, the best either of us had seen in the region, and we were thrilled to discover that it extended to the other side of the road. "Life's good, isn't it, Em?" Indeed!



Bill with his colony of Blue Fingers, Snowgum Rd,

In my eyes, the most important legacies that Bill leaves behind are those of warm friendship, shared knowledge and joy in the wonder and appreciation of nature. Many of my favourite places, including Enfield Forest, Mt Beckworth, Muckleford Forest, Clarksdale, Dereel and my own block and developing house are now indelibly stamped with delightful memories of time spent with Bill. Rest in peace, dear Bill.

Emily Noble

Vale Ronald William (Bill) Murphy

By Paul Norquay

Bill and his wife Pat joined Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat not long after attending their first meeting in 1968 – one which they had been invited to by Stella Bedggood to hear Victorian Government Botanist, Jim Willis.

Four years later in 1972 Bill became the President of the club; in '73 and '75 also. Both were also members of the Ballarat Australian Plants Society.

Over the years Pat and Bill had many excursions into the bushlands around Ballarat, and travelled regularly around Victoria and interstate. They both took a great deal of interest in the natural environment; Pat loved to document plants and Bill loved photographing them.

Locally, their favourite place was Enfield forest – so close to Ballarat for a quick trip or for a longer all-day outing. Both became very knowledgeable about local plants and places to visit and gave slide presentations to numerous groups.



Bill Murphy (centre) with friends & fellow field nats Paul Norquay (left) & John Mildren (right - sunglasses) at Lilwarre, Sep 2014

In 1978 Cliff Beaglehole worked in the Ballarat area on The Victorian Vascular Plant Checklists publication. Pat would go out with Cliff collecting and identifying the plants in our local bushlands. While Bill was sometimes able to go on these trips too, his main task was to cook an evening meal while Pat and Cliff set about pressing their plant specimens and production of plant lists for various sites.

In 2009, not long after Pat died, Bill and I started going for trips out into the bush looking at native plants: native orchids were his favourite. I came to know most of the special orchid spots he and Pat had discovered in the Ballarat district and as far afield as Anglesea, Stawell, the Grampians, and Rushworth.

For the last twelve years we have usually gone for a drive on Tuesdays (often with a picnic lunch), many times to Enfield forest, but Woowookarung and Creswick forests were also popular.

Technology was something Bill seemed to enjoy and quickly mastered. He used to read one or two newspapers on his iPad while having his breakfast and a cup of coffee. The iPad was also very useful for looking up recipes and extending his culinary repertoire. It was also to store his photos, some of which he turned into cards or were framed and given to family and friends.

Perhaps one of his best bits of technology was his electric scooter – his new wheels after he had to stop driving a car. Trips into the centre of Ballarat from Sebastopol for shopping; into Ballarat station, up the special ramp onto the train and off to Melbourne; also, to Warrnambool and Adelaide for holidays. He never ceased to amaze me!

Most of us will remember his company on club field trips, his pleasure at being awarded a life membership of our club; the egg sandwiches that appeared at field nat suppers; his immaculately polished shoes; his good conversation and friendship.

Talk on Fungi by Les Hanrahan
Friday 3 June 2022 via ZOOM

Report by Andy Arnold

Images provided by Carol Hall

Our Field Naturalist Club is indeed fortunate to have our own fungi enthusiast who gave a beautifully illustrated talk about fungi. As of 16 June 2022, Les had recorded on the **iNaturalist project “FNCB Fungi of Victoria”** 739 observations of 174 species which is more than two and a half times more than any other contributor to the project. Les also posts his observations on the Fungimap project in iNaturalist where he is also a high achiever. Not only has Les had such a prodigious record of recording fungi but he also possesses excellent skills in field identification of fungi which go with the entry of accurate records.



A fungal field trip with Les is usually an intensive learning experience for most of us in the Club. Les has participated in field trips by the Fungi Group of FNCV and brings with him the knowledge gained to benefit our activities.



Slime Mould

Korweinguboora

Les began by giving us an insight into the importance of fungi in our ecosystems. I was not able to capture all his words, but I have found this quote which I think approximately expresses some of the same sentiments as Les did in his presentation.

Most people are surprised to learn that not only do the higher fungi play an essential role in Australian bushland ecology but without them, life on earth as we know it would rapidly cease.Mushrooms and toadstools [as well as other fungi] are the silent and essential partners in the woodlands and forests. Without beneficial fungal partnerships with their roots, our gum trees and ... plants cannot survive. The macrofungi are critical food resources for many of our native mammals, reptiles, and invertebrates, but equally important as recyclers of plant and [other organic material] in these forests. Without them, nutrients would become progressively locked into non decaying ...debris; the forests would become choked with fallen logs, branches, and leaves; and many soils would [become depleted of] their nutrients and their productivity. ---adapted from A.M. Young 2005



Yellow waxcap

Hygrocybe flavescens

Les defined some important terms for us in the study of fungi:-

Hypha (pl. hyphae) -- a microscopic, tubular minute, threadlike filament forming part of the mycelium of a fungus.

Mycelium (pl. mycelia) the 'body' of a fungus; it is composed of an assemblage of hyphae which penetrate the substrate on which the fungus is growing and absorb nutrients through the filament walls. In a mycelium the hyphae have walls constructed out of a type of protein belonging to a general class of chemical called chitins which puts them apart from plant cells which have cellulose walls. Chitin gives the hyphae walls strength. Under suitable conditions, the hyphae of mycelia extend their growth and produce enzymes which are exuded and breakdown complex substances in the substrate. The hyphae then absorb the simpler chemicals released and absorb them to enable further growth.

Spore – the microscopic reproductive unit and structure found in most fungi; spores are usually single-celled and, depending upon the fungal species may have short or long lives before reaching a suitable substrate.

Les defined 3 categories of types of fungi which are substrate based.

Parasitic – (Gr. *Parasitos* = eating beside another; from *para* = beside + *sitos* = wheat, food): an organism which lives at the expense of another, usually invading it and causing disease.

Saprophytic (saprotrophic) (Gr. *Sapros* = rotten; *trophe* = food): obtaining nutrients from dead and decaying organic matter, (includes dead wood).

Mycorrhizal – symbiotic: a mutually beneficial association (symbiotic) between fungal hyphae and the roots of higher plants. (For more information refer to Fungi Down Under – pg. 3)

After giving us an understanding of these useful terms in the study of fungi, Les then gave us the highlight of the evening, running through a set of about 60 of his beautiful images of a wide diversity of fungi he has photographed in the field and which I have set out in the table below (see pp.12-13).



White Jelly Fungus
Tremella fuciformis



Emperor Cortinar

Cortinarius archeri

Les completed the presentation by providing us with some useful resources for further investigating the wonderful and amazing world of fungi. Where possible I have tried to cross link the resources Les provided us with, to similar images of the species that he showed us. Thank you, Les, for a very interesting presentation and with the weather improving we will finally get to enjoy the field trip you are leading.

Field Guides:

A Field Guide to Australian Fungi. Bruce Fuhrer, Bloomings Books 2005

A Field Guide to Tasmanian Fungi. Genevieve Gates and David Ratkowsky 2nd edition 2016 TasFNC

Fungi Down Under (Fungimap Guide to Australian Fungi) Pat Grey and Ed Grey 2009

Australian Fungi Illustrated. Ian McCann 2003

Fungi of the Wombat Forest. Wombat Forestcare folder.

Fungi in Australia. Download from FNCV website

A Field Guide to the Fungi of Australia. A.M.Young, illustrated by Kay Smith, UNSW Press 2005

Websites:

Atlas of Living Australia. <http://ala.org.au>

Fungimap. <http://fungimap.org.au>

iNaturalist. inaturalist.org/projects/fungimap-australia (App)

iNaturalist. <https://www.inaturalist.org> (website)

Scientific name	Common name	iNat	GG DR 2nd	BF 2005
<i>Agaricus xanthodermus</i>			27	18
<i>Aleuria aurantia</i>				298
<i>Amanita muscaria</i>	Fly Agaric		30	24
<i>Amanita xanthocephala</i>			32	27
<i>Armillaria luteobubalina</i>			34	29
<i>Ascocoryne sarcoides</i>	Purple Jelly drops		214	301
<i>Austroboletus niveus</i>			152	187
<i>Bolbitis titubans</i>			36	
<i>Boletellus emodensis</i>			154	188
<i>Boletus barragensis</i>			154	189
<i>Clavulinopsis amoena</i>			162	
<i>Clavulinopsis sulcata</i> (<i>Clavaria miniata</i>)			163	198 (304)
<i>Coprinellus disseminatus</i>	Fairies Bonnets		45	41
<i>Cortinarius archeri</i>	Emperor Cortinar		48	44
<i>Cortinarius austrovenetus</i>			50	
<i>Cortinarius austrocinnabarinus</i>			49	
<i>Cortinarius austroalbidus</i>			49	46
<i>Cortinarius rotundisporus</i>			54	48
<i>Cruentomyces viscidocruentus</i>	Ruby bonnet	✓		
<i>Drechmeria gunni</i>		✓		
<i>Enteloma moongum</i>				65
<i>Enteloma rodwayi</i>			76	66
<i>Geastrum triplex</i>			172	217
<i>Gliophorus chromolimoneus</i>	Waxcap (Yellow)	✓		
<i>Gymnopilus junonius</i>			84	74

Hydnum repandum	Hedgehog (spines as gills)		208	242
Hygrocybe sp.	Waxy Gills		89	
Hypholoma fasciculare (var fasciculare)	Sulphur Tufts		96	96
Lactarius deliciosus	Saffron Milkcap		100	104
Lactarius eucalypti			101	104
Lycoperdon pyriforme			196	214
Marasmius elegans	Velvet Marasmius		113	122
Morchella australiana	Aust Black Morel	✓		
Mycena clarkeana			118	130
Mycena epipterygia group	Yellow-stemmed Mycena		119	133
Mycena interrupta	Pixie's parasol		119	133
Mycena subgalericulata			123	141, 144
Omphalotus nidiformis	Ghost fungus		125	182
Phallus indusiatus	Stinkhorn (Cairns)			235
Panellus longinquus	Shell fungus (pink)		126	159
Porpolomopsis lewellinae			91	
Phylloporus rhodoxanthus	Golden Gilled Bolete	✓		
Pisolithus arhizus				219, 377
Psathyrella echinata	Spiny Psathyrella		135	163
Ramaria gracilis				211
Ramaria versatilis	Coral fungus			212
Russula persanguinea			142	170
Scarcodon sp.	Spine group (spines as gills)		209	
Scleroderma cepa			197	220
Stereum versicolor		✓		
Trametes versicolor	Rainbow fungus		194	274
Tremella fuciformis	White Jelly		175	295
Tricholomopsis aff. rutlans			147	176



Coral fungus *Ramaria anziana*



Coral fungus *Ramaria versatilis*



Flame fungus *Clavaria miniata*



Purple Jellydisc
Ascocoryne sarcoides



Green Skinhead *Cortinarius austrovenetus*

Yellow Earth
Buttons
*Discinella
terrestris*





Hedgehog fungus *Hydnum repandum*



Mycena sp.

Mauve Splitting
Waxcap
*Porpolomopsis
lewellingiae*





*Inocybe
austrofibrillosa*

Pixies' Parasols
Mycena interrupta



*Tremella
fuciformis*

Recognition is a “high honour”

*What follows is an edited excerpt from March 2018.
FNCB’s online blog reported on the awarding of
Life Membership to Bill Murphy.*

“Bill has been a member for 50 years and this in itself a marvellous achievement. He and his wife Pat, joined the club not long after attending their first meeting in 1968. They were invited to attend a meeting by Stella Bedggood, who thought they might be interested in coming along to hear the guest speaker, who turned out to be none other than Jim Willis.

From that time on they were hooked and actively participated in many of the club functions including field trips, campouts and working bees. Bill was president of the club in 1972, 1973 and 1975, and when he retired from work in the late 1980’s he was able to join Pat on many forays into the bush.

Pat and Stella had been undertaking excursions to collect plant records for some years and Bill made a plant press that could take up to 50 specimens. One of the outcomes of this was the presentation of Pat’s collection of dried and labelled plants to the Melbourne Herbarium which contained 1138 specimens.

While Pat was a keen botanist, Bill developed a passion for photography and together they made a great team. Bill is no slouch when it came to identifying plants himself. In the early 2000’s the idea developed to produce a book about the wattles of Ballarat. Pat researched and documented where the wattles are found and Bill provided a lot of the photos. When Pat died in 2006, the club finished the book, which is still a handy resource.

On receiving his award, Bill thanked the club for the “high honour”, shared a few memories of some of the outstanding members of the past including; Mary White, Alan Sonsee, Pat Murphy, Helen Burgess, and Greg Binns and acknowledged the contribution of the existing members.”



FNCB President John Gregurke
congratulates Bill Murphy on his
Life Membership.

Fungi at “Stringybark”

Some images to share from our wanderings over the past few weeks.



Coral fungus *Clavulina* sp.



Bonnets *Mycena* sp.



Rustgills *Gymnopilus* sp.



Russula persanguinea



Elegant Blue Webcap (*Cortinarius rotundisporus*)

Bill and
Kathy Elder

Excursions and Meetings coming up

July Friday 1st Club meeting 7.30 pm via Zoom. Members will receive a link a few days prior. Presenter Chris Timewell from Bird-life Australia will tell us about projects being undertaken by the Woodland Bird Team.

Sunday 3rd This will be an **Afternoon Excursion** to the Pittong/ Happy Valley area led by Club Secretary Emily Noble. This excursion is still under development but will be an afternoon excursion in the Pittong/ Happy Valley area. Looking for fungi, orchids, birds, mosses and lichens amongst some uncommon vegetation communities. Meet in Fed. Uni car park, cnr Gillies and Gregory Sts Wendouree for convoy, departing at 1.00 pm sharp. OR catch us at Linton hotel at 1.30.

Bring camp chairs, camera, field guides, thermos, afternoon tea and dress to suit the weather (forecast is showers, max of 10°C).

Coming up in August.....

Friday 5th: Emily will present on Orchids of Ballarat, followed on **Sunday 7th** by a winter orchid-hunting field trip around Enfield Forest and Dereel starting at 10am from the Fed Uni carpark. BYO lunch, etc. 4.00pm finish.

Committee

President	Margaret Rich
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Treasurer	Kathy Elder
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Meetings - may continue to be held via Zoom.

Members will be kept informed of arrangements each month.

A monthly publication of the Field Naturalists' Club of Ballarat Inc.
Incorporation # A0014919P ABN 13 150 403 135